

Alnus incana Swamp Shrubland [Provisional]

COMMON NAME	Speckled Alder Swamp Shrubland
SYNONYM	Speckled Alder Swamp
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS	Shrubland (III)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS	Deciduous shrubland (III.B)
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP	Cold-deciduous shrubland (III.B.2)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP	Natural/Semi-natural (III.B.2.N)
FORMATION	Seasonally flooded cold-deciduous shrubland (III.B.2.N.e)
ALLIANCE	ALNUS INCANA SEASONALLY FLOODED SHRUBLAND ALLIANCE

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 2

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM TERRESTRIAL

RANGE

Isle Royale National Park

This community is common and occurs throughout the park.

Globally

This association is found in the Midwest and Northeast United States.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

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This community occupies wet depressions with saturated or seasonally flooded muck soils. It mostly occurs at elevations ranging from 600 to 750 feet, but it can occur as high as 1230 feet.

Globally

Sites are typically along streams, lakeshores, edges of beaver meadows, swales associated with small streams in peatlands or upland forests, or near seeps. Most have little to no slope, but some sites are on moderate slopes. Hydrologic conditions can range from temporarily flooded to semipermanently flooded. The water that affects this alliance is non-stagnant, nutrient rich, and often slightly calcareous (Curtis 1959). Soils are wet, often mucks or peats (Anderson 1982, Chapman *et al.* 1989).

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Isle Royale National Park

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Tall shrub	<i>Alnus incana</i>
Forb	<i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i>
Graminoid	<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>

Globally

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Tall shrub	<i>Alnus incana</i>
Graminoid	<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Isle Royale National Park

Alnus incana

Globally

Alnus incana, *Calamagrostis canadensis*

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

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The speckled alder swamp is a wooded wetland dominated by tall, deciduous shrubs. There may be a sparse tree layer with up to 20% cover; common trees include *Picea glauca*, *Thuja occidentalis*, *Betula papyrifera*, and *Fraxinus nigra* (each less than 5% cover). The tall shrub layer has 30 to 100% cover; *Alnus incana* is the most abundant shrub (average is 50 to 75% cover); other shrubs occasionally present include *Cornus sericea*, *Rubus idaeus*, and *Rubus parviflorus* (each with less than 10% cover). Herbaceous cover varies from 40 to 90%; the most abundant herbs are *Calamagrostis canadensis* (usually 5 to 25% cover) and *Symplocarpus foetidus* (usually less than 10% cover). Other characteristic herbs are *Caltha palustris*,

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Carex stricta, *Impatiens capensis*, *Thalictrum dasycarpum*, and *Equisetum fluviatile*. Mosses may be common in the groundlayer, especially *Sphagnum* spp. and *Calliergon* spp. (each with less than 10% cover).

Globally

The vegetation is dominated by tall shrubs, 2-8 meters tall, with a moderately open to dense shrub canopy. There is an understory of shorter shrubs and herbaceous species. The density of the understory varies inversely with the tall shrub canopy. The overstory is usually overwhelmingly dominated by *Alnus incana*, but where it is not as dominant, other shrubs, such as *Cornus sericea*, *Rubus idaeus*, *Salix* spp., *Spiraea alba*, and *Viburnum* spp. can be found. The herbaceous layer contains species such as *Aster simplex*, *Calamagrostis canadensis*, *Caltha palustris*, *Carex lacustris*, *Carex prairea*, *Eupatorium maculatum*, *Impatiens capensis*, *Lycopus uniflorus*, *Scirpus atrovirens*, *Symplocarpus foetidus*, *Thelypteris palustris*, and *Typha* spp. Mosses include *Climacium dendroides*. Where the tall shrub canopy is open, the graminoids can become dense. Trees are found in many stands, including *Acer rubrum*, *Fraxinus nigra*, and *Thuja occidentalis* (Anderson 1982, Curtis 1959, Harris *et al.* 1996, Minnesota NHP 1993).

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES

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Information not available.

CONSERVATION RANK G5?.

DATABASE CODE CEGL002381

MAP UNITS 36

COMMENTS

REFERENCES